



Implementing a Healthy Restaurant Program Resource Tool Kit for County Agencies



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Healthy Howard Initiative—Building a Model Public Health Community in Howard County, Maryland

Supported by: The Horizon Foundation

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the following people who contributed to the development of this publication:

The Maryland Restaurant Association; Howard County Bureau of Environmental Health; University of Maryland; Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health; New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Maryland Dietetic Association; and all certified Healthy Restaurants in Howard County.

We would also like to thank the following Howard County Health Department staff, University of Maryland medical students, and Johns Hopkins Public Health students for their contributions to the Healthy Restaurant Program:

Arron Hieatt; Bert Nixon; Trudy Hyde; Julie Shapiro; Becky Ramsing; Jessica DeGrandis; Sophia Leung; Jennifer Guyther; Victoria Saah Giffi; and Mari Nicholson.

For more information on the Healthy Howard Initiative and to download a free copy of this tool kit, please visit <http://www.hchealth.org> and click on the “Healthy Howard” tab.

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TOOL KIT CONTENTS

I.	Welcome letter from Dr. Peter L. Beilenson, Howard County Health Officer	p.4
II.	Implementing a Healthy Restaurant Program—Action Steps for your County	
	- Action Step 1: Assemble Key Staff	p.5
	- Action Step 2: Monetary Needs	p.5
	- Action Step 3: Obtain Buy-In	p.6
	- Action Step 4: Develop and Finalize Nutrition Criteria	p.7
	- Action Step 5: Develop and Finalize Environmental Health Criteria	p.8
	- Action Step 6: Create the Healthy Restaurant Application Packet	p.9
	- Action Step 7: Outreach and Application Assistance	p.15
	- Action Step 8: Evaluate Nutrition Submissions	p.16
	- Action Step 9: Evaluate Food and Hygiene Inspections	p.18
	- Action Step 10: Notify Accepted and Unaccepted Restaurants	p.19
	- Action Step 11: Get the Word Out	p.20
	- Action Step 12: Thinking Ahead, Planning for Year 2	p.21
III.	Sample Healthy Restaurant Materials	
	- Sample Acceptance Letter	p.22
	- Sample Advertising Sheets	p.23
	- Sample Food Allergy Disclaimer	p.24
	- Sample Patron and Restaurant Survey	p.25
IV.	Meet “Howie” the Healthy Howard mascot	p.26

I. Welcome Letter

Dear Colleague:

In April 2007, County Executive Ken Ulman and I announced the Healthy Howard Initiative. Coordinated by the Howard County Health Department (HCHD), Healthy Howard identifies important, everyday institutions including restaurants, recreation programs, schools, homes, and workplaces and encourages them to promote and provide healthful products and activities to residents and workers in the county through accreditation and recognition programs. By building partnerships within the public and private sectors and working with the community, Howard County hopes to become a model public health community for other jurisdictions.

There are six phases of the Healthy Howard Initiative:

1. Healthy Restaurants
2. Healthy Recreation
3. Healthy Homes
4. Healthy Schools
5. Healthy Workplaces
6. Healthy Individuals



Within one year, more than 20 diverse facilities, including delis, organic dining, fine dining, and fast food chains were certified as “Healthy Restaurants.” The benefits to a Healthy Restaurant program include the following:

- Provides equal importance and emphasis on environmental health standards and nutrition
- Exposes county residents to the importance and benefits of selecting health menu options when eating out
- Facilitates a stronger relationship between the Health Department and local restaurants and food facilities to promote clean, safe and healthy environments.

We’ve designed this tool kit to help you implement a Healthy Restaurant Initiative in your home county. These pages offer a step-by-step guide, including examples of our certification criteria, and application materials as well as recommendations regarding community buy-in and marketing. I also encourage you to visit www.hchealth.org for a complete listing of all participating Healthy Restaurants and their healthy menu options. Should you have any additional questions please contact Samantha O’Neil, our Director of Outreach and Community Partnerships, at 410.313.6295 or soneil@howardcountymd.gov.

Thank you for all that you do to improve the health and wellness of Marylanders!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Beilenson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter L. Beilenson, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer
Howard County Health Department

II. Implementing a Healthy Restaurant Program

This section will provide you with an overview of program essentials, including staffing and financial resources and how to obtain buy-in from the restaurant community.

Action Step 1: Assemble Key Staff

Refer to Table 1 for staffing recommendations.

Action Step 2: Monetary Needs

You will need to identify funds for the following items:

- **Nutritional software** to conduct recipe analysis. There are a number of available licensing options and reduced rates can be attained through partnering with a local non-profit organization, school system, or local restaurant group (Approx. \$900)
- **Window cling sheets** to create the Healthy Restaurant decal. You can purchase these through a vendor or at your local office supply store (Approx. \$20 for 12 sheets)
- **Advertising** in local newspapers and other local publications
 - 1/4 page ad: approx. \$200-350
 - 1/2 page ad: approx: \$425
 - Full page ad: approx: \$550
 - **But don't forget to investigate FREE placements**
- **Paper, copying and postage** for mailings of program information and applications.

Table 1: Staffing Considerations

Program Coordinator—You need a leader to get this effort off the ground. This person will be responsible for pulling together key staff, identifying necessary resources, developing an outreach strategy, and obtaining buy-in from the restaurant community.

While agencies vary in staff size and expertise, here are the types of positions that will be important for the program:

- **Registered Dietitian (RD) or Licensed Dietitian-Nutritionist (LDN)** to develop the nutrition criteria for the program and to assist with the recipe analysis of menu items. If your agency does not have an in-house RD or LDN, a **Community Health Educator** would be able to perform these same functions based on national caloric and dietary guidelines.
- **Environmental Health staff member** from the Food and Hygiene Program—to work with the Program Coordinator to develop the environmental health criteria. This staff person will also inform sanitarians of the program and encourage workers to spread the word (even supply applications) when conducting inspections at restaurants and other food facilities.
- **Student Interns** are a valuable addition to any agency. For this program, students rotating through your agency can get involved with outreach to restaurants and even conducting the required recipe analysis. We've utilized both undergraduate and graduate level interns.

Action Step 3: Obtain Buy-In

The success of this program depends on how well you are able to engage the restaurant community. Get out there and start talking with restaurant owners, managers, and chefs. Explain the purpose and goals of the Healthy Restaurant Program and ask for their ideas regarding certification criteria and the application. We always emphasized that an application to this program would be completely voluntary and that those recognized as Healthy Restaurants would signal to patrons a high standard for clean, safe, and healthy food practices. Common questions we received focused on trans fat bans, who was responsible for conducting nutritional analysis, and the importance of environmental health criteria.

Not sure how to connect with restaurants? Refer to Table 2 for suggestions.



Tip: Before developing the guidelines and criteria for your program, consider the resources needed. Although there is not a high cost involved with the program, buy-in from the beginning and allocating human resources is essential.



Table 2: Connecting with Restaurants

☆ **Does your county have a local Restaurant Association?** If you are unsure, call the Restaurant Association of Maryland at 410.290.6800 or visit www.marylandrestaurants.com

☆ **Set up an informal meeting with representatives of the restaurant community before you announce the program.** Try to reach diverse restaurants like delis, steakhouses, high end restaurants, and fast food chains. You will be surprised by the number of restaurants that think promoting health and cleanliness is a good thing. Suggest that the meeting be held at an interested restaurant—come to them.

☆ **Understand the no trans fat trend.** Many major manufacturers of cooking oils are switching to trans fat free oils. Restaurants may slowly be switching due to market trends. Consider a 6 month grace period for those that are switching to trans fat free oil. For more information on the market trend of phasing out trans fat visit the Harvard Public Health Review at: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/review/spring07/spr07transfat.html>

☆ **Offer assistance.** Be open and encouraging, but also firm. Naturally, you want the program to be successful, however, you want to set strong, achievable standards from the beginning. Realize that many restaurants may not get into the program, but they can always apply again at a later date.

Action Step 4: Develop and Finalize Nutrition Criteria

Listed below are the nutrition criteria for our Healthy Restaurant Program. Our Program Coordinator worked closely with a registered dietitian to develop the criteria. In addition, we invited comments from restaurant owners and chefs. A final version emerged after several rounds of revision.

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE NUTRITION GUIDELINES

☆ **Be trans fat free.** If you store, use, or serve any food item containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, shortening or margarine, it must contain less than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving. When **re-applying** for *Healthy Restaurant status* starting January 1, 2008, *no* food can contain trans fat. *This policy, adapted from New York City's ordinance, applies only to artificial trans fats.*

- Trans fat is a type of fat that raises the risk of heart disease. While some trans fat occurs naturally, most of it is artificial.
- Artificial trans fat is manufactured through a chemical process. It is found in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. Foods that contain artificial trans fat include margarines, shortenings, and fry oils, as well as some baked goods, mixes, and packaged foods.



Tip: Have the application serve as both functional and educational. Include information about what trans fat is and how it differs from “naturally” occurring trans fat. Also include ways to modify meals to make them “healthier.”

☆ **Offer 2 (or more) healthy menu options.**

Each Breakfast Entrée (if applicable) must: (Entrée includes any side dishes, but not a drink)

1. Include:
 - A. Up to 750 calories
 - B. Less than 30% of calories from fat
 - C. Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
 - D. Up to 1050 mg of sodium
2. Include:
 - A. Lean protein (e.g., eggs, white meat poultry, lean beef, tofu)
 - B. Vegetables (e.g., mushroom or peppers in omelets) and/or
 - C. Fresh fruit (e.g., parfaits with light yogurt, fruit salad)

3. DO NOT include:
 - A. Deep-fried items

Each Lunch/Dinner Entrée Must: (Entrée includes any side dishes, but not a drink)

1. Include:
 - A. Up to 750 calories
 - B. Less than 30% of calories from fat
 - C. Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
 - D. Up to 1050 mg of sodium
2. Include:
 - A. Lean protein (e.g., white meat poultry, lean beef, pork, fish or other seafood, tofu, beans, eggs, and soy)
 - B. At least 1 serving (1/2 cup) of non-starchy vegetables and/or fresh fruit (e.g., broccoli, spinach, cabbage, brussels sprouts, dark leafy greens, carrots, squash, peppers)
3. DO NOT include:
 - A. Deep-fried items

Action Step 5: Develop and Finalize Environmental Health Criteria

The Environmental Health standards for our Healthy Restaurant Program are listed below. Our Program Coordinator worked closely with the Bureau of Environmental Health to develop the criteria.

HOWARD COUNTY **SAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CRITERIA**

Substantive Violations Defined

In addition to meeting nutritional guidelines, *Healthy Restaurants* may not have “substantive violations.” Substantive violations are based on the three most recent inspections conducted by the Bureau of Environmental Health. These criteria will be reevaluated each year.

- *A Healthy Restaurant* may not exceed **one critical** violation in any of its last three inspections. In addition, that single violation must be corrected immediately.
- *A Healthy Restaurant* may not exceed an average of **four non-critical** violations in its last three inspections. No non-critical violation may occur more than three times during a single inspection, with a maximum average of nine occurrences during the last three inspections. **Any non-critical violations reported to the Health Department prior to an inspection will not be counted toward this limit, provided the applicant restaurant resolves those violations on a timely basis.**
- *A Healthy Restaurant* may not have an insect or rodent presence at two consecutive inspections.
- *A Healthy Restaurant* must follow Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan Guidelines. Please make sure the establishment is up to date.
- *A Healthy Restaurant* may not have caused any Health Department-confirmed food illness outbreaks in the preceding calendar year.



Tip: Establishing an average number of acceptable non-critical violations can be tricky. You'll want to work with your Environmental Health Bureau to set a realistic average. For example, an average of 4 non-critical violations essentially means that over the past 3 inspections, a restaurant could have a combined total of 12 non-critical violations. Our Health Department felt that up to 12 non-critical violations was a fair threshold for Healthy Restaurant eligibility.

Action Step 6: Create the Healthy Restaurant Application Packet

Once you have the nutrition and environmental health criteria set, it is time to start work on the application packet. Here are the types of items you'll want to include in your application packet. Samples from our program appear below and on the next four pages.

1. Cover Letter
2. Instruction Page, including benefits of Healthy Restaurant designation
3. Application sheet, including check boxes of compliance
4. Affidavit
5. List of Criteria

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Dear Manager and/or Owner:

In an effort to make Howard County a healthier community, the Howard County Health Department launched the *Healthy Howard Initiative* in April 2007. Healthy Howard is coordinated by the Howard County Health Department and its main goal is to work with and within institutions including, restaurants, businesses, schools, recreation programs, homes, and other entities in the county to undertake activities that will dramatically improve the health of the county's residents and workers alike.

Our strongest program to date is the Healthy Restaurant Program which is a voluntary application process to become certified by the Health Department as a "clean, safe, and healthy" facility. Currently, **there are 23 participating restaurants** that meet the nutrition and environmental health standards listed below. To be granted this title a restaurant has to have met the following criteria:

- Passed environmental health inspections: no more than 1 critical violation over the past year and an average of 4 non critical violations over the past 3 inspections
- Compliance with the "Clean Indoor Air Act"
- Have nutritional information available for customers upon request
- Ensure that all menu items contain fewer than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving (provide label)
- Provide 2 menu items that met the following standards: a caloric content of less than 750 calories, less than 30% fat, less than 10% saturated fat, and less than 1050 mg of sodium

Your restaurant may be eligible to qualify as a Healthy Restaurant based on the history of your previous three food and hygiene inspections. Benefits of being a recognized Healthy Restaurant are:

- A Healthy Howard decal for display on the window of the establishment
- Establishment's link on the Healthy Howard web page at www.hchealth.org
- A listing in local newspapers and other community publications
- Promotion at community events county wide

If you are interested in applying or have any questions please contact Sam O'Neil at (410) 313-6295 or Erica Doxzen at (410) 313-4264.

Sincerely,
Samantha F. O'Neil
Howard County Health Department

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE INSTRUCTION PAGE

Thank you for your interest in becoming one of Howard County's *Healthy Restaurants*!

This application packet is designed to give you an overview of the Healthy Howard Initiative and offer suggestions on how restaurants can provide a clean, safe, environment for residents while taking a proactive role in promoting healthy food choices.

Benefits of becoming a Healthy Restaurant include:

- A Healthy Howard decal for display on the window of the establishment
- Establishment's link on the Healthy Howard web page at www.hchealth.org
- A listing in local newspapers
- Exposure at local and community events

What you need to do:

1. Complete the one-page application
2. Sign the affidavit
3. Submit two recipes that you would like to be highlighted as "Healthy"

Please submit your application by regular mail or email to our Healthy Howard Coordinator at:

Mailing Address:
Howard County Health Department
Attn: Samantha O'Neil
7178 Columbia Gateway Dr.
Columbia, MD 21046

Email: soneil@howardcountymd.gov



HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE APPLICATION SHEET

Name of Establishment _____

Type of Establishment (e.g.: restaurant, food preparation, café, etc.) _____

Type of Food Served (e.g.: Asian, American, Italian, Southwestern, French, Subs, etc.) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Alt. phone _____

Contact name _____ Contact email _____

Website address _____

Healthy Restaurant Criteria

(Please check appropriate box with "X")

YES

NO

1. Do all menu items containing partially hydrogenated oils contain fewer than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving?*

☐☐

(Please attach a copy of menu and see page 4 for definitions)

2. Does the establishment offer 2 (or more) Healthy Menu Items?

☐☐

If yes, please note what healthy items are offered below:

3. Are nutritional and caloric information available on menus or on separate sheets when customers ask?

☐☐

4. Is the establishment in compliance with the "Clean Indoor Air Act"?

☐☐

5. Do you meet the food and hygiene criteria found on p. 7 of this application?

☐☐

(If you are unsure, please contact Samantha O'Neil at 410-313-6295)

*HCHD recognizes that restaurants may be waiting for orders of trans fat free cooking oils. Please attach a record of when the cooking oil was purchased and a six month courtesy period will be granted.

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE AFFIDAVIT

I understand that the Healthy Howard Initiative is designed to encourage the promotion and maintenance of healthy habits and lifestyles for all Howard County residents. I understand *Healthy Restaurants* encourages establishments to take proactive and voluntary measures to promote healthy eating and healthy foods.

I understand that this establishment must adhere to Howard County Health Department (HCHD) guidelines and follow the recommendations of the FDA and USDA. Although this is a voluntary program, I am also aware that HCHD Environmental Health inspectors may conduct a Healthy Howard inspection in addition to routine inspections.

In addition to the food guidelines, I understand that this establishment must adhere to **all criteria listed on the application form** in order to become a *Healthy Restaurant*.

I understand that *Healthy Restaurants* is voluntary and confirm that the information on this application is complete and accurate.

I understand that if this establishment is recognized as a *Healthy Restaurant*, the establishment will receive a decal logo for windows and menus; be listed on the Healthy Howard website; be mentioned in local newspapers, and be advertised at community centers and other private and public areas.

I have read the above information and completed the enclosed *Healthy Restaurant* application packet.

Date _____

Name _____

Establishment _____

Signature _____

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE CRITERIA

Healthy Restaurants must:

1. Contain 0.5 or fewer grams of trans fat per serving on all menu items containing partially hydrogenated oils
2. Offer 2 or more Healthy Menu Options
3. Provide nutritional and caloric information on menus and/or on separate sheets
4. Be in compliance with the “Clean Indoor Air Act”
5. Not have substantive violations as determined by the Bureau of Environmental Health

Pages 5-6 of your application packet highlight explanations and definitions of Healthy Restaurant criteria.

If you are unsure of the total nutritional content of your menu items, please remember the Howard County Health Department staff are here to help. Please send at least two complete recipes that you would like to be highlighted as “healthy” with this application. **If the recipes include pre-packaged items, please provide labels.** Evaluations will be returned as soon as possible.

Thank you for helping to make Howard a healthier county!



Tip: One way to help applicants identify existing or create healthier menus is to provide examples. We gave the following suggestions in our application packet.

Suggestions for a Healthy Menu

The following suggestions are not required *Healthy Restaurant* criteria. However, we encourage you to make use of these examples in designing a healthy menu.

Examples of Healthy Choices:

- Make smaller portions available on request
- Availability of light salad dressing for salads
- Choices of whole grain items including whole grain/wheat breads, pasta, bagels, etc (at least 3 grams per serving)
- Choice of Skim, 1%, or 2% milk
- Availability of vegetables including broccoli, spinach, cabbage, brussels sprouts, romaine dark green lettuce, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, squash, peppers, legumes/beans
- Availability of fresh fruit
- Availability of “special requests”
- For additional resources regarding healthy foods, visit these government websites:
[http://www.health.gov/Dietary Guidelines](http://www.health.gov/Dietary%20Guidelines)
<http://www.mypyramid.gov>
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/wh-nutr.html>

Action Step 7: Outreach and Application Assistance

Outreach and application assistance go hand in hand, particularly to ensure that once you establish contact with interested restaurants you are seen as helpful and accessible throughout the process.

The following steps are helpful in enhancing outreach techniques and application assistance.

- **Identify facilities that already meet the Environmental Health (EH) criteria.** Work with an Environmental Health staffer to obtain the most recent inspection reports; average the number and identify qualifying facilities.
- **Disseminate introductory letter of the Healthy Restaurant Program to all food permit holders.** Even if a restaurant may not qualify at the time the letter is sent out, it is important to inform restaurant owners of the program.
- **Disseminate program letters to targeted restaurants** that meet EH criteria.
- **Coordinate with Environmental Health and disseminate letters** when food permits are up for renewal. Again, introduce facilities to the program.
- **Provide health inspectors with application packets** when they go out for routine inspections. This potentially fosters a better relationship between the restaurant manager/owner and inspector.



Tip: As mentioned earlier, undergraduate and graduate student interns are a tremendous asset when implementing a Healthy Restaurant Program. Utilize interns for outreach phone calls and visits. When calling restaurants, ask to speak to the manager. If the manager is available, briefly describe the voluntary program and ask if he or she would like an application or would like to meet in person to discuss it further. Face-to-face interaction is very helpful and effective.

Action Step 8: Evaluate Nutrition Submissions

After sending out applications and following up with restaurants, you should expect your first wave of applications to come in. Start with the recipe analysis first, as the food and hygiene inspection review will be handled by the Environmental Health Bureau.

- **Identify easy to use nutrition software.** There are a number of user-friendly, nutritional software applications that can be used to evaluate submitted recipes. To determine the caloric and nutritional outcomes of submitted recipes, we invested in Esha Research, Inc.'s Food Processor® SQL, Nutrition and Fitness Software. For complete information on this software package, please call (800) 659-ESHA or visit <http://www.esha.com/foodprosqli>
- **Enter complete recipe information, including measurements, into nutritional software.** Keep in mind your criteria for total calories, % of fat from calories, % of saturated fat from calories, sodium, and trans fat. We learned that even if a department has an in-house RD or LDN, the Program Coordinator or assigned intern could easily handle recipe intake. If there are outstanding nutrition questions, then it may be helpful to consult with an RD or LDN.

Table 3 offers tips for evaluating recipes.



Tip: Make sure you have 2 full recipes to analyze. Ask restaurants to be as specific as possible when writing down measurements and ingredients found in the recipe.

Table 3: Tips for Evaluating Recipes

☆ **Some national chain menu items are available.** A number of items ranging from the Olive Garden to Wendy's can be found in nutritional software when "searching" for a recipe. However, be sure to match what is on the software with what the chain actually posts in their restaurant or on line.

☆ **Keep communication open between you and restaurant.** You may find that some submitted recipes do meet the nutrition and caloric criteria. Get in touch with the applicant and offer suggestions on how to cut down on sodium, fat, etc. You can even suggest that the restaurant submit an alternate recipe that could possibly meet the criteria.

☆ **Utilize interns.** The Healthy Restaurant Program is a great way for interns to develop their communication and program management skills as well as gain experience in community relations and outreach. Also, a nutrition software program like Food Processor® SQL is very user friendly—almost anyone can work with it.

HOWARD COUNTY SAMPLE RECIPE SUBMISSION

The following is an actual analysis of a grilled chicken recipe we received from a Healthy Restaurant applicant. After “plugging in” all measurements and ingredients, the nutrition software provided us with the information listed below. We then compared the recipe to our nutrition standards and approved this recipe.

Nutrition Facts Serving Size (658g) Servings Per Container <hr/> Amount Per Serving Calories 460 Calories from Fat 80 <hr/> % Daily Value* Total Fat 9g 14% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g Cholesterol 75mg 25% Sodium 1030mg 43% Total Carbohydrate 57g 19% Dietary Fiber 7g 28% Sugars 26g Protein 43g <hr/> Vitamin A 70% • Vitamin C 260% Calcium 10% • Iron 30% <small>*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.</small>	Does this recipe meet our standards?	
	Under 750 calories?	
	0g of artificial trans fat?	
	Up to 1050 mg of sodium?	
1.9% calories from sat. fat	Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat?	
17.4% calories from fat	Less than 30% of calories from fat?	

Healthy Howard Nutrition Check List

1. 0g trans fat
2. 750 calories or less
3. Up to 1050 mg of sodium
4. Less than 30% of calories from fat
5. Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat



Action Step 9: Evaluate Food and Hygiene Inspections

This evaluation piece is typically conducted by your Environmental Health Bureau or equivalent department. We strongly recommend creating a plan with your Environmental Health representative to allow the Program Coordinator to access reporting data. This can be done through the development of a comprehensive spreadsheet of average critical and non-critical violations so you can clearly see why an applicant may or may not qualify to become a “Healthy Restaurant”. You may also want to establish a response time log to ensure that you receive any violation reports in a timely fashion.



Tip: Evaluating the Environmental Health criteria for applicants can be more time consuming than the nutrition analysis.

Remember to work with your Environmental Health representative. Establish a realistic response time. To start, we agreed to a two-week response time for Environmental Health to provide results on the applicants.

While food inspection reporting systems vary by county, you may be able to develop a chart similar to the one displayed below.

Inspect Type	Facility	Sani- Priority	tarian	Address	Pur- pose	# of Viola- tions	Critical Items (code)
1/12/06 RESTAU- RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS.	M	4	
RESTAU- 6/7/06 RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS	E	7	
11/28/06 RESTAU- RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS	M	5	
RESTAU- 3/8/07 RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS	M	4	
7/16/07 RESTAU- RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS	M	1	5
11/8/07 RESTAU- RANT-H	Restaurant A	H	#1	ADDRESS	M	4	

**Av. 4 non critical
violations**

**No more
than 1 critical
violation**



Action Step 10: Notify Accepted and Unaccepted Restaurants

After all evaluations are completed, it is now time to notify those that are accepted into the program and those that did not make it. For those that are not eligible, it is usually because of failure to meet the Environmental Health criteria. Table 4 lists the items you'll want to have in the acceptance packet. You'll want to make arrangements to hand deliver the acceptance packet to the restaurant.

Table 4: Acceptance Packet Contents

- ☆ Congratulatory letter from Health Officer
- ☆ Decal to display on restaurant's window
- ☆ Advertising sheets of approved Healthy Menu Options
- ☆ Food allergy disclaimer to post near registers or on dining tables (this is optional)

For samples of these items, please see Section III.

Sample Healthy Restaurant decal for window



Dear Manager:

Thank you for submitting your application to become one of Howard County's Healthy Restaurants. Unfortunately, we cannot certify XXX as a **Healthy Restaurant** at this time. XXX cannot be certified at this time because there were too many substantive violations in recent inspections of your facility.

Although XXX meets the nutritional and trans fat requirements, the establishment had exceeded the number of critical violations that determine Healthy Restaurant status. In addition to meeting nutritional guidelines, **Healthy Restaurants** have an average of no more than four non critical violations and no more than one critical violation over the past three inspections. Over the past three inspections, XXX had two critical violations and an average of four non critical violations.

If you would like more information about the nature of your violations, please contact the Bureau of Environmental Health Food Program at 410-313-1772. The Food Program is also available to work with you to understand the nature of each violation and avoid future violations. The Food Program is a valuable resource that I encourage you to utilize.

I commend XXX for promoting a trans fat free menu and healthy options and I encourage you to apply to become a **Healthy Restaurant** again in the future. **Please note that you can apply again as soon as your inspections meet the guidelines in the Healthy Restaurant application.**

Once again, thank you for applying to become a **Healthy Restaurant** and I hope you continue promoting a clean, safe, and healthy Howard County.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Beilenson, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer

Action Step 11: Get the Word Out

A major selling point of implementing a voluntary, Healthy Restaurant Program is the opportunity for restaurants to be promoted throughout the community. In Howard County, certified restaurants receive a Healthy Restaurant decal to display on the store front window, a listing on the Health Department website, a listing in local newspapers, and promotion at county-wide events. Table 5 lists key steps for promoting your first batch of approved restaurants.



Tip: After setting the number of restaurants you want to certify within the first few months, we recommend developing a media strategy to promote the restaurants and your program.

Table 5: Promoting Your First Batch of Healthy Restaurants

☆ **Set a goal of how many restaurants you want to have in the program after 3-5 months.** In Howard County, our goals was to have 5 restaurants within 4 months of the program start. Why 5? We wanted to coordinate a press event announcing the “First Five” Healthy Restaurants to expose the media and community to the Healthy Restaurant Program.

☆ **Media exposure can help your program grow.** VIPs including the County Executive and Health Officer spoke about the importance of recognizing Healthy Restaurants as clean, safe, and healthy facilities for families.

☆ **Hold the press conference at one of the Healthy Restaurant locations.** Invite all certified restaurant owners, managers, and workers to attend as well as other important people who were part of “initial buy-in” (e.g. the Restaurant Association, other restaurant owners, Environmental Health Bureau).

☆ **Design certificates to award first Healthy Restaurants.** The press conference is not simply to tout the Restaurant program. Recognize the restaurants that worked hard to maintain clean, safe, and healthy standards. Provide your Healthy Restaurants with a certificate of appreciation signed by the Health Officer and/or County Executive.



The “First Five” Healthy Restaurants with County Executive Ken Ulman and Health Officer Dr. Peter Beilenson. August 2007.

This event received coverage from local print media including the *Baltimore Sun*, *Howard County Times*, and *Business Monthly*

Featured: Joe’s Place; Café David; Wendy’s; Chick-Fil-A; and Jordan’s Steakhouse

Action Step 12: Thinking Ahead, Planning for Year 2

It's never too early to begin thinking about the next steps of your Healthy Restaurant Program, particularly as the first year can demonstrate the need for increased funding, staffing, and evaluation. As the Howard County Health Department plans for a successful year two of its Healthy Restaurant Program, we identified a numbers of areas for improvement. Table 6 offers a list of issues to keep in mind as you look to grow your program.



Tip: Continue to stay in touch with Healthy Restaurant participants throughout the year. Inform them that their one year anniversary is coming up and you would like them to keep participating. Keeping the communication channels open will help your program grow stronger and increase the program's impact in the community.



Keep hard copy records (or electronic copies if possible) of all applicants and their anniversary dates.

Table 6: Looking Ahead

☆ **Evaluation considerations**— Ask your restaurants about: 1) the ease of the application process, and 2) the need/desire for increased marketing of their Healthy Restaurant status. Assess patrons' knowledge of the program and satisfaction with healthy menu options offered.

☆ **Decal update**—Your decal is a major part of your program's brand. If there are modifications to the decal, ensure that all Healthy Restaurants receive the updated version once they are recertified.

☆ **Increase marketing and advertising of Healthy Restaurants**—As stated earlier, a major draw to this type of program is the level of publicity the restaurant would receive. Publicity will not come without appropriate marketing. An undergraduate or graduate student studying marketing, public relations, or media could help to develop and implement a program advertising strategy.

☆ **Recertification Process**—It is important to set a clear date of when current Healthy Restaurants need to apply for recertification. In Howard County they must re-apply after their one year anniversary date. For example, if a restaurant was recognized as a Healthy Restaurant in September 2007, that facility would have to re-apply in September 2008. Have your Program Coordinator keep an electronic spreadsheet and/or hard copy record of the Restaurant approval dates. We recommend that you send out a reminder letter one month in advance of the anniversary date to the restaurants.

III. Sample Healthy Restaurant Materials

The next three pages will provide you with sample Healthy Restaurant documents including:

1. Complete Acceptance Package for approved Healthy Restaurants (Acceptance Letter, Advertising Sheet, and Food Allergy Disclaimer)
2. Sample Patron Survey for Evaluation
3. Sample Restaurant Survey for Participating Healthy Restaurants

Sample Acceptance Letter

Date

Contact

Title, Restaurant Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Congratulations on becoming one of Howard County's *Healthy Restaurants* for 2008! I am pleased to recognize Howard Community College's Café on the Quad as an establishment that promotes healthy menu options and is a clean and safe environment for County residents. Café on the Quad adds to our increasingly diverse Healthy Restaurant participants and we are excited to promote your acceptance to the community!

Based on the application's nutritional criteria, the two menu items that have met our "Healthy" guidelines are the **Fettuccine with Chicken and Cilantro and Grilled Chicken Breast Sandwich with Fruit and Grilled Zucchini**. Attached to this letter is a form which can be used to advertise your Healthy menu options, as well as a Healthy Howard decal to display on your establishment's door or window. Please feel free to advertise your healthy menu options in other ways as well.

In addition, if you have more menu items that you would like to be highlighted as Healthy and also meet our nutritional guidelines, please submit them to Samantha O'Neil at soneil@howardcountymd.gov or fax them to 410-313-6303, Attn: Samantha O'Neil.

Please note that this award is currently active, however, it can be revoked if there are cases of persistent food inspection violations. This award is valid for one year at which time you can re-apply for Healthy Restaurant status. A reminder letter will be sent to you at a later date.

Thank you again for participating in Healthy Howard and congratulations on promoting a clean, safe, and healthy Howard County.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Beilenson, M.D., M.P.H.
Howard County Health Officer

SAMPLE ADVERTISING SHEET OF APPROVED HEALTHY MENU OPTIONS



Restaurant *Healthy Howard*

THIS RESTAURANT OFFERS TWO HEALTHY MENU ITEMS NUTRITIONALLY ANALYZED BY THE HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT USING NUTRITIONAL SOFTWARE, FOOD PROCESSOR SQL ©

CAFÉ ON THE QUAD *Howard Community College*



FETTUCCHINE W/ CHICKEN AND CILANTRO

TOTAL CALORIES: 700

% OF TOTAL CALORIES FROM
FAT: 18.9%

SATURATED FAT: 2.7%

SODIUM: 610 MG



GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST SANDWICH W/ FRUIT AND GRILLED ZUCCHINI

TOTAL CALORIES: 460

% OF TOTAL CALORIES FROM
FAT: 17.4%

SATURATED FAT: 1.9%

SODIUM: 1030 MG



Healthy Criteria

www.hchealth.org

- ▶ ALL ITEMS CONTAIN LESS THAN 0.5 GRAMS OF ARTIFICIAL TRANS FAT
- ▶ THIS ESTABLISHMENT COMPLIES WITH THE "CLEAN INDOOR AIR ACT"
- ▶ THIS ESTABLISHMENT HAS MET ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CRITERIA FROM APPLICATION
- ▶ NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
- ▶ AT LEAST TWO HEALTHY MENU ITEMS ARE FEATURED

SAMPLE FOOD ALLERGY DISCLAIMER



We strive to do our very best in providing accurate information that will help you make the best food choices for you and your family.

Please inform the restaurant manager or server if you have a food allergy, and ask to see the ingredient listings for any item you are interested in choosing.

*Café
on the Quad*

SAMPLE PATRON SURVEY

Healthy Restaurant Survey for Patrons

Why did you choose this restaurant today? (Circle all that apply)

Type of food	Healthy options
Service	Convenience
Cleanliness	Other _____

How did you find out about this restaurant?

Advertisement	"Healthy Howard" information
Word of mouth	Passer-by
Website	Other _____

Does it matter to you that food is trans-fat free? Yes No

Would you pay a little more if you knew the food was certified healthy? Yes No

Will you visit this restaurant again? Yes No (if No, explain)

(additional comments on back)

SAMPLE RESTAURANT SURVEY

Healthy Howard Restaurant Survey

Restaurant Name _____

Person completing survey _____

Position _____

Phone _____

Email _____

1. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being very easy to 10 being very difficult, how easy was the application to complete? Please circle one.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Approximately how long did it take to complete the application in days or weeks?

3. Would you recommend any changes that would make the application process easier?

4. Have you noticed an increase in the number of patrons entering your restaurant?

5. Has there been an increase in the number of people ordering your healthy options?

6. Would you consider adding more healthy options to your menu?

7. Have you been advertising your *Healthy Restaurant* status on your own? If so, where?

8. Any other comments or suggestions

IV. Meet “Howie”

Howie is the Healthy Howard mascot. He was created by PlayTime ® in partnership with Howard County General Hospital for the launch of the “Healthy Howard” play area at the Columbia Mall.

Howie is the fit and friendly face of the Healthy Howard Initiative and can be seen throughout the county on the Healthy Restaurant decals, in Healthy Howard Schools, and beyond!



Howard County schools got into the healthy spirit by participating in a poster and essay contest putting Howie in a “healthy environment.”

Howie can also be seen at various events in the County including festivals, health fairs, and other community happenings!

*Howie at the 1st Annual
Healthy Howard Day,
June 1, 2008*



Tip: To help advance your program it is helpful to have creative and recognizable branding techniques. Howie not only appears on the “Healthy Restaurant” decal, but he is seen throughout the community at health and wellness events and is utilized in a number of school settings. Thinking of a mascot? Why not develop a contest in your county, or tap into school and community networks!